

The Watershed Game

Generating Public Value for Over Ten Years



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Presenting Issue

About 40% of lakes and streams in Minnesota are “impaired,” i.e., not meeting water quality standards established to keep our waters swimmable, fishable, and drinkable.¹ Solving this problem requires a well-informed public working cooperatively across land uses at a watershed scale to reduce impacts.

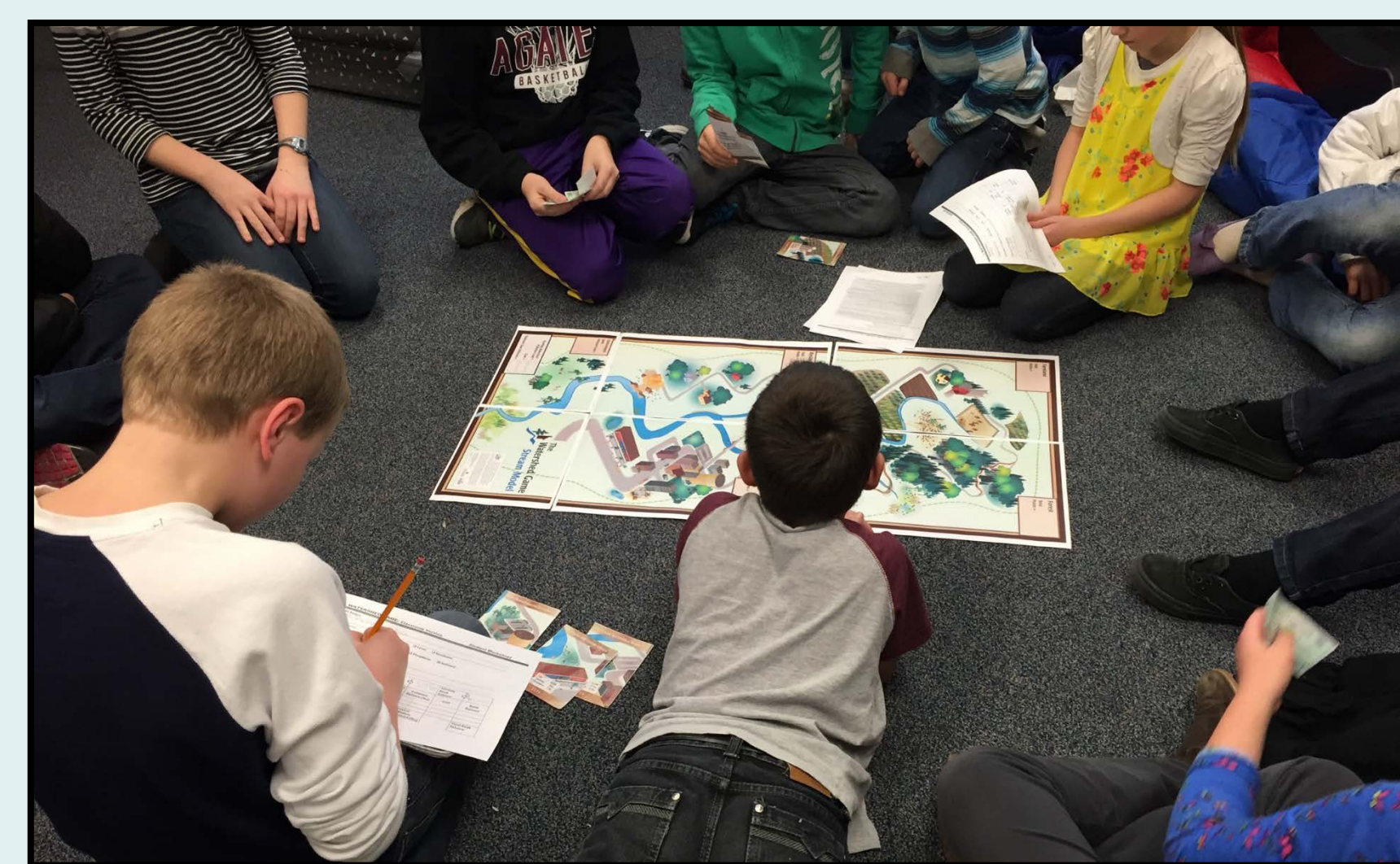
Extension's Programmatic Response

The Watershed Game:

- Simulates varied land uses in a typical watershed, each impacting downstream water quality.
- Provides a safe, playful way to learn how land uses impact water quality and what management practices can best reduce or prevent impacts
- Requires participants to work cooperatively to reach their clean water goals.
- Simulates a stream, lake, and large river watershed
- Uses a “train-the-trainer” model for maximum outreach and impacts.



Freshly-trained game facilitators ready to go



Students using the Classroom Version



Choosing best practices to reduce pollution

Target Audiences

The Watershed Game for Local Leaders

- Elected and appointed local officials
- Community leaders
- Extension and environmental educators
- Local and state agency staff
- Master Naturalists and Master Watershed Stewards

The Watershed Game: Classroom Version

- K12 and college students and educators

Why Extension and Sea Grant?

- ✓ Trusted sources of research-based solutions to complex land and water management problems.
- ✓ Trusted conveners of diverse stakeholders in non-confrontational atmospheres that build trust, mutual respect, and shared purpose around critical issues.

Behavior or Action Outcomes

Training impacts



Participant Comments:

“excellent tool to describe a complex problem”

“shows the reality of a difficult collaboration process”

“great way to show students the actions that can be taken to reduce water pollution into local water bodies”

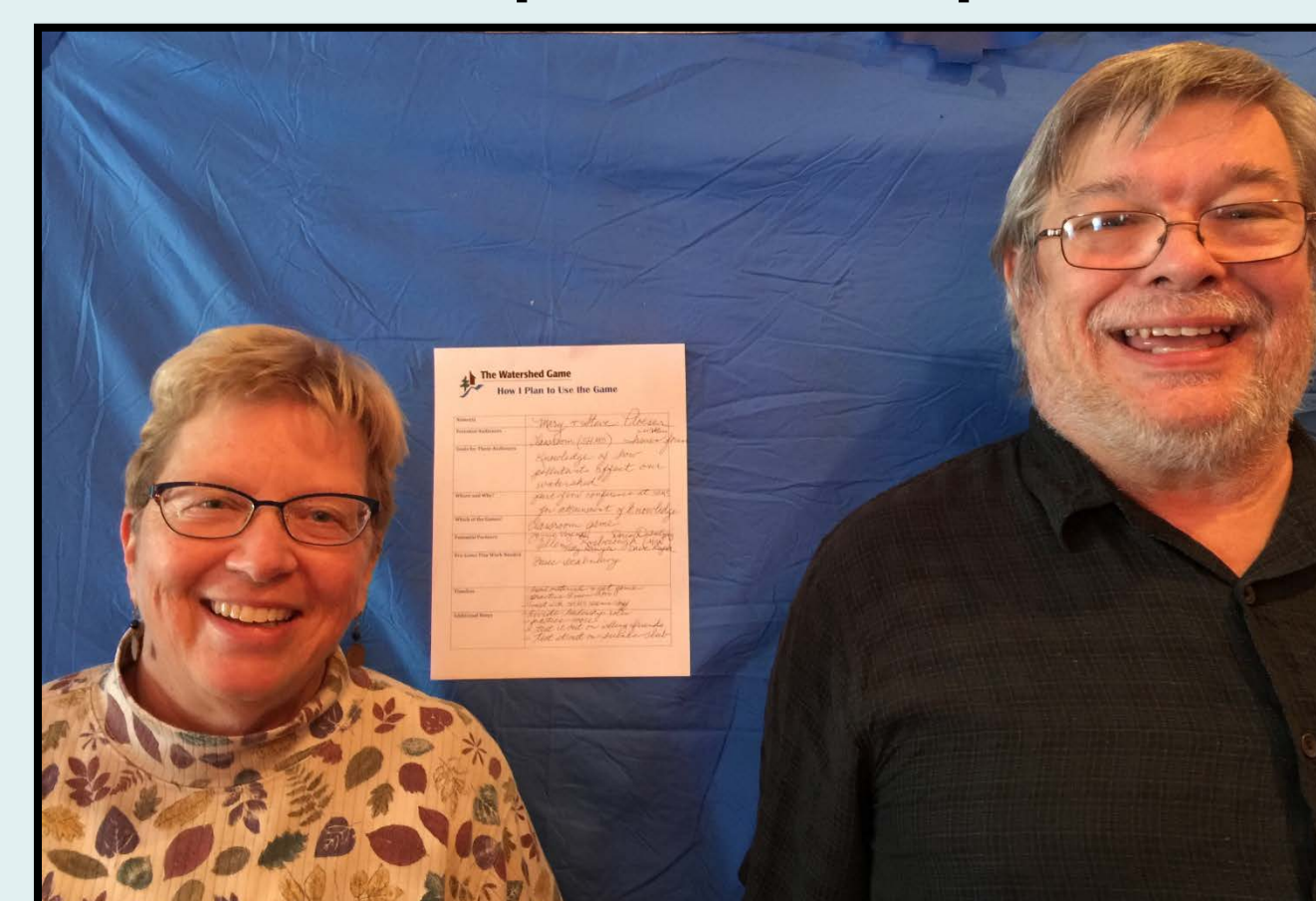
Broader Impacts – Building Capacity

Train-the-Trainer Model

- 270 trained facilitators across 19 states
- 87 trained facilitators in Minnesota
- Partnering with Land Grant and Sea Grant networks

On-Going Support

- Newly-trained facilitators develop action plans



Proudly sharing their new action plan



Train-the-trainer workshop in Duluth in partnership with the Minnesota DNR Project WET Program. 2016

- **NorthlandNEMO.org** provides a Community of Practice to share games and facilitators regionally

References

1. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/minnesotas-impaired-waters-list>